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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon career education leaders and specialists as sources, the authors explore the status of career education by discussing definitions, program dimensions, roles of career education, program evaluation, and recommendations for the State of Mississippi. The most common definitions of career education focus on five aspects: (1) career development, (2) integral part of education, (3) individualized, (4) comprehensive, and (5) preparation for life. Prevalent career education program dimensions include: self, occupational information, psychology of work, organizational, social contribution, planfulness, work ethics, school-work relationship, occupational preparation, and work adjustment. Central to the implementation of the career education concept are the roles of teachers, counselors, and vocational educators, with business and industry personnel and parents also playing vital roles. In the area of evaluation, currently accepted guidelines involve: goals, criteria, participants, feedback and follow-through, and planned continuous process. Various evaluation models are described--cost-effectiveness approach, outcome approaches, and local assessment techniques. Recommendations for Mississippi include provision for: adequate funding of education, pre-service and in-service training of educators, adequate counselors, continued expansion of comprehensive educational programs, and local system support in a statewide commitment. (EA)

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THE STATUS OF CAREER EDUCATION

F. J. Eicke and Anthony V. Pappas, Jr.

Career education is one of the most significant innovations on the current educational scene. It is a strong movement and will become a continuing emphasis and an important part of educational thought and practice in American schools.

This forecast is both historically and contemporarily based. American education traditionally has been a pragmatic endeavor, committed to relevance in its practices and utility in its products. In a complex technological society with an historical emphasis on work, career education has restated the major concerns expressed by society in periodic statements of objectives and principles. Persons from all segments of society have seen in the principles of career education a means to address contemporary issues. American society today faces problems of unemployment in certain definable groups, a decreasing rate of economic growth and increasing inflation, an unmet need for qualified workers both in terms of skills and worker attitudes, and a host of other social and economic problems. Few people would deny the belief that American education is a response to these problems, with the result that political figures, educational leaders, and the general public have endorsed career education as a viable answer to several contemporary problems.

If career education is a major force in addressing critical problems facing American society today, we need to ask questions about what it is and why we should support it, how we can translate the theory and rationale of career education into practice, and what effects we can expect from that practice.

Defining Career Education

Definitions of career education abound. Hoyt (1973a) conservatively listed twenty definitions drawn from state agencies, professional associations, and authorities in the field. The definitions describe and delimit the basic nature and purposes of the concept. The most common appear to be:

a) Career development: The focus of career education is career development, a concept which also enjoys many definitions. Authorities agree, however, that career development is a developmental process with which the schools must be concerned.

b) Integral part of education: Proponents maintain that career education is not an add-on system, but a blending of academic, vocational, and guidance efforts in a planned, sequential, orderly curriculum.

c) Individualized: Career education is intended to increase rather than restrict career options and to systematically deal with decision-making skills so that choice rather than chance will characterize career and life decisions. Career education must serve *all* students on the basis of *their* individual needs.

d) Comprehensive: Many proponents do not restrict career education to the school, and emphasize that career education is experientially-based in the home, the community, and the business-industry complex (Hoyt, Evans, Machin, and Mangum, 1974; Smoker, 1974).

e) Preparation for life: Career education can be defined as a career-centered approach to education which views the student's total school experience as preparation for life, especially his working life. (Public Education Study Committee, 1973)

Dimensions

The definitions of career education have been put into practice in numerous programs now operating. The dimensions of these programs vary in range and emphasis, but the following dimensions/outcome statements alert the practitioner to the inclusive nature of the career education concept:

1. Self dimension: The student will identify values, interests, abilities, needs and other self characteristics as they relate to occupational roles.

2. Occupational information dimension: The student will explore occupational areas and describe opportunities, potential satisfactions, required roles of workers and other related dimensions.

3. Psychology of work dimension: The student will describe the psychological meaning of work and its value in the human experience.

4. Organizational dimension: The student will describe modern work structure, work environments, and organizational characteristics.

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5. Social contribution dimension: The student will tell how the individual's role in work is tied to the well-being of the community.

6. Planfulness dimension: The student will demonstrate planfulness in striving to achieve occupational goals and objectives.

7. Work ethics dimension: The student will demonstrate through work-relevant behavior that one is acquiring a concept of self as a productive person in a work-centered society.

8. School-work relationship dimension: The student will describe that relationship which exists between basic skills, marketable skills, and interpersonal skills and the jobs one can reasonably aspire to in adult life.

9. Occupational preparation dimension: The student will demonstrate possession of a reasonable degree of basic skills, knowledges, and behavioral characteristics associated with some type of work or occupational area.

10. Work adjustment dimension: The student will demonstrate through work-relevant behavior an ability to learn, adjust to, and advance in one's chosen occupation (Hansen, Klaurens, and Tennyson, 1973).

An additional dimension which is becoming increasingly prevalant is that of relating education to life. If we use the unabridged Random House Dictionary of the English Language for a definition of "career," we find "progress or general course of action of a person through life." In keeping with Hansen, et. al., the student will demonstrate those characteristics that relate school and work to the relevance of life.

Career Development and Career Education

Career education can be viewed as a systematic attempt to facilitate or guide the career development of the student. Herr and Swails (1973) view career development as one of the major theoretical belief systems that gives career education construct validity.

> Because career development has been found to differ among people and groups, it is evident that such development is modifiable; it can be learned. Thus, career development theory represents a reservoir of ideas and constructs that can be brought together to create programmatic responses designed to help students acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills essential for effective planning, choosing and employability (p. 52).

"Developmental" includes the notions of order and sequence, such that we can program for the next step by laying the basis in previous steps. Development will occur in the natural order of events. Programmatically, we can translate the broad career development principles into a systematic set of learning experiences (Hansen, et. al. 1973). The career development research of Super (1957), Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrod, and Herma (1951), Miller and Form (1951), Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963), among others (Osipow, 1968), has been translated into stages or phases of career education. The most common expressions are career awareness (K-6), career exploration (7-9), and career preparation and placement (10-adult), the latter term including educational placements in a postsecondary program, continuing and adult education, and exit-reentry programs for dropouts. As the result of numerous programs, conceptual and operational models are appearing which are sequential, K-12, and which outline the contributions of the major components of educational institutions in the career education model. (See Figures 1 and 2)

Throughout this sequence of developmental activities is intertwined the need for the student to participate in self-awareness. As Moorhead (1974) states, "Perhaps the heart of the career education challenge is embodied in the personal integrative imperative to know self, know the world and relate to the world."

Roles in Career Education

Predating the concept of career education were efforts in a number of areas to increase the interrelationship between school and work. One of the major components of career education is the "infusion" of career-relevant information into the general education aspects of the curriculum. With the arrival of the career education concept, many educators recognized that "infusion into the curriculum" characterized the work of good teachers. From preschool to postsecondary levels, emphasizing the communication requirements of work in language arts classes, the complexities of our technological society in economics classes, or work ethics expressed in literature was characteristic of many teachers. The role of the teacher has been considered central in the implementation of the career education concept (Hansen, et. al., 1973; Hoyt, et. al., 1974; Keller, 1972), although an overemphasis on the infusion strategy has been questioned in a National Institute of Education position paper published in April, 1973, and entitled "Forward Plan for Career Education Research and Development" (Smoker, 1974).

A second major role in a school-based career education program is filled by the guidance counselor. School counselors have a long history of interest in career development with career guidance activities forming the core of their educational role. Two major reviews of career

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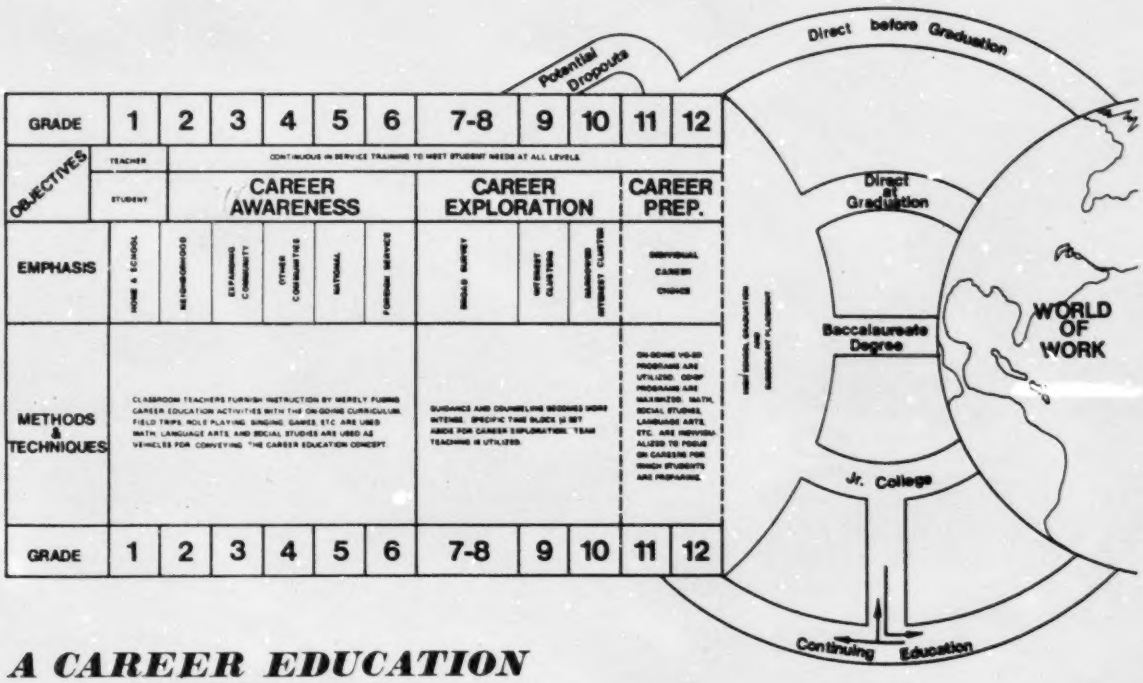


A CAREER EDUCATION MODEL K-12

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI: Division of Vocational and Technical Education, State Department of Education, Jackson, Mississippi

Figure 1

guidance practices are now available (Campbell, Walz Miller, and Kriger, 1973; Hansen, 1970), although counselors have been criticized for deemphasizing this historical role (Ginzberg, 1971; NACVE, 1972).

In a speech delivered at the Career Education Conference at the University of Mississippi, June 19, 1974, Hansen listed a number of strategies for career education delivery. Among those which are consistent with the counselor role are:

1) Counseling: Career exploration and planning in individual, group, and peer counseling settings.

2) Placement: Counselors should be aware of the requirements and availability of educational and vocational settings, and should seek out possibilities for exploratory work experiences.

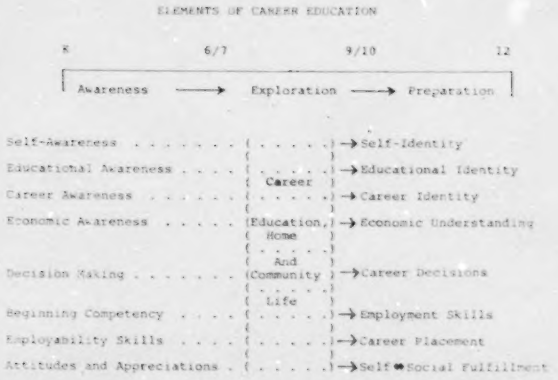
3) Role models: Adults and peers who have experienced the world of work introduce a potential source of learning through modeling.

4) Career resource centers: The information service is a traditional guidance service. Career education has reemphasized the need for reliable local and national data with particular reference to the psychosocial aspects of work and workers.

5) Staff development: Counselors can assist teachers in expanding the range of career guidance techniques in their classrooms, including use of the career resource center, structured and simulated exercises in decision-making and values clarification, psychological education (Ivey and Alschuler, 1973) and field visits to businesses and industries and seminars involving business-industry-labor personnel (the major emphasis of Career Guidance Institutes sponsored by the National Alliance of Businessmen).

McKinnon, in a speech delivered at the University of Mississippi, reported on the Mesa, Arizona, Career Guidance Project, including unit plans at various educational levels based on an extensive needs assessment. Examples of units are: Personal characteristics, Learning to listen/listening to learn, and solving problems with parents.

A third major component of career education programming is filled by vocational educators. In line with the developmental focus of career education, vocational education is increasingly being viewed as a kindergarten through adult component of education with hands-on experiences throughout the school years, and more specific skills training in secondary and postsecondary programs. The Cluster Concept Program developed by the University of



Division of Vocational Education and Community Colleges, Alabama State Department of Education. Adapted from Comprehensive Career Education Model, Center for Vocational and Technical Education, The Ohio State University (See Miller, 1973).

FIGURE 2

Maryland's Industrial Education Department is an example of the development of new ways of conceptualizing vocational education (Herr and Swails, 1973). Recent reports have criticized secondary level vocational education as too specific while endorsing the cluster concept as providing more opportunity for entry and advancement in a career ladder (Reubens, 1974). Career and vocational educators have come to recognize the importance of general education and work attitudes in career advancement and that some courses typically thought of as general or academic education (e.g., mathematics, art, music) are vocational courses for some students (Hoyt, 1974).

Numerous additional roles are emerging as the concept of career education becomes a reality. Business and industry personnel are increasingly looking to the schools and universities for vocational preparation in the broadest sense, and are becoming actively involved in programs at all levels. It is no longer unusual to find industrial and business personnel from various levels and fields involved in the schools, including meeting with students, conducting tours, supervising students in exploratory work experiences, advising vocational and technical schools, and arranging cooperative programs.

Finally, parents play a vital role in career education (Hoyt, et. al., 1974). The home is the first work unit with which a child becomes familiar and the parents are the source of continuing motivation, encouragement, and support as a student moves toward independence in adult roles. Parental involvement must be an integral part in the initial planning and needs assessment and in the implementation of career education programs.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a process which systematically measures program progress to determine what modifications or adjustment might be required to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. It is an *action* process that begins early in the program. It is always related to the goals and objectives of the program and it is a continuing process. Some of the most common techniques of evaluation found in career education programs to date include direct solicitation of the reactions of participants, innovation and goal tests to actually measure progress, performance tests or observations of a student demonstrating an ability or skill, comparison of results of old versus new methods, and the observations of the career education process to determine problems and final remedies (Bailey and Stadt, 1973; Hoyt, et. al. 1974).

In recent years there have been increasing demands that education be held accountable for its actions, i.e., some evidence of the accomplishments and gains should be provided in return for the public's support and tax investments. The principal of accountability suggests that all phases of the school's educational effort must justify existence through evidence of their accomplishments. This evidence is probably best provided through the process of evaluation.

In general, evaluation seeks to provide evidence of a program's performance through assessment of progress toward program objectives. The evidence that is collected becomes a valuable basis for future program planning and decision making (Gibson, 1972).

Guiding Framework. In career education curriculum development efforts may be characterized by their purpose, their content, their environment, their methods, and the changes they bring about. Evaluation is a complex process because each of the many characteristics require separate attention (Bailey and Stadt, 1973).

Gibson (1972) outlines some of the currently accepted guidelines for an effective evaluation program:

1. Goals: The establishment of identifiable goals is essential to program development. These recognized program goals provide directions and indications of intent which in turn guide planning and procedures.

2. Criteria: Effective evaluation is dependent on valid criteria. Once the program goals are clearly defined, valid criteria for measuring progress toward these goals must be established. Both vaguely stated goals and vaguely defined criteria lessen the effectiveness of program evaluation.

3. Participants: Program evaluation involves all persons affected. It should minimally involve those who are themselves affected by the program; i.e., the guidance staff, the teaching staff, school administrators, the pupils, and their parents. "External" evaluators such as counselor educators, state department of education staff, and counselors from area schools can also be helpful; however, the primary contribution to effective evaluation will come from those who have first hand involvement in the program.

4. Feedback and Follow-Through: Evaluation, in itself, is of little value. It is only through the use of the

results that program improvements can be made. The results of evaluation must be made available to all concerned. Planned follow-through for using these results should be incorporated in program planning and decision making.

5. Planned Continuous Process: Evaluation is most effective as a planned, continuous process. Inasmuch as pupil guidance (and career development) is a continuous process, the appraisal of such programs is most effective when planned in a continuous process. This infers specific plans and designated responsibilities for both the on-going evaluation of a program's progress as well as the more extensive annual or semi-annual review.

It is apparent to those involved in career education that evaluation is a complex process and each of the many characteristics requires separate attention. In the developmental stages of programs, two periods of evaluation usually occur. *Formative* evaluations are undertaken during periods of materials preparation. The question is asked whether or not the materials are feasible and how they can be improved. A *Summative* evaluation is done after completion of materials. Its focus is on describing the effects of the use of the materials with the student body and circumstances in which use takes place. Summative evaluation is sometimes directed to audiences in addition to the project staff, including the research community and lay public (Bailey and Stadt, 1973). Unfortunately, very little summative evaluation exists that has been intended for the research community or other publics.

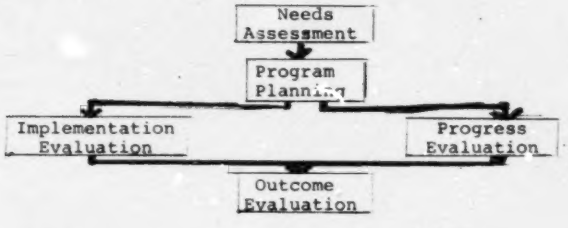


FIGURE 3

Evaluation is dependent on the program model applied to the educational situation. Figure 3 presents a very simple paradigm of a basic operational model for program implementation.

Needs Assessment. Needs Assessment is the initial step in establishing a career education program. A National Vocational Guidance Association working paper on guidelines for school-based career guidance programs states that emphasis should be placed on needs assessment first and program needs second (NVGA, 1973). A needs assessment identifies the desires of the relevant community publics, students, parents, educators, community representatives from labor, business, and industry, and other concerned individuals, and expresses their expectations of student outcomes. The assessment should include observations of students concerning what is relevant, consulting with parents and educators regarding student outcomes, and the input of local employers regarding work-related learning and attitudes that are desirable for the workers they employ. Former students are valuable sources of data concerning the needs of current students.

The primary objective of needs assessment is to ensure that the program will be tailor-made to meet the career development needs of students. It is also important to assess available resources which could be used in responding to identified student needs. For example, what building, materials, time, transportation, and personnel are available.

There are many accepted models of career development, and any one of these can be used to validate student status on concepts such as Crites' Construct of Career Maturity, the need for self-acceptance, the need for a sense of achievement and self-worth, or the need for competencies in career-related areas of personal development. After needs have been validated, priorities can be set and program goals stated in terms of those validated needs.

Once the goals are outlined, measurable objectives should be laid out, specifying in concrete terms the knowledge, skill, or performance to be expected.

Evaluation activities should determine the degree to which the objectives have been met. Persons responsible for career education programs need data which points to program success. Subjective hunches concerning program effectiveness are not enough. Evaluation should include both process and product results related to agreed upon objectives and goals (NVGA, 1973).

Evaluation Models in Use. The literature does not contain much in the way of scientific analysis of the various methods of evaluation. However, many models are presented either for suggested use by program planners or actually reported in program synopses.

One of the most comprehensive models is the cost-effectiveness approach. Mintz (1973) reported comparing annual earnings differences between post-secondary and secondary graduates of vocational-technical programs. The Center for Vocational and Technical Education, at Ohio State, in their Innovation Evaluation Guide (IEG) (1973) suggests an elaborate model balancing benefits with costs. Their procedure breaks down program benefits into:

1. Individual Pupil Growth
   - –Rate of Learning
   - –Scope of Learning
   - –Attitudes
2. Program operations
   - –efficiency
   - –effectiveness
3. Society and the economy
   - –entry and advancement in an occupation
   - –economic and social efficiencies
   - –social values
   - –community involvement

4. Credibility
   - –validity
   - –reliability
5. Assurance contract
   - –warranty

The costs are treated as follows:

1. Funding
   - –costs
   - –sources of dollars
   - –availability of dollars
   - –proportion of dollars available from different sources
   - –limitations of use if other than local funds
2. Time considerations
   - –installation time
   - –lead time
   - –planning time
   - –operation time
   - –cyclical consideration
3. Installation considerations
   - –acceptance
   - –complexity
   - –divisibility
   - –policy changes
   - –degree of development
   - –feasibility
   - –adaptability
4. Organizational Change
   - –disruption of routine
   - –effect on staff organization
   - –role change for individuals
   - –new relationships among groups
5. Personnel needs
   - –quality of staff
   - –teaching of other experiences
   - –personnel development required by innovation
6. Space requirements
   - –space (housing)
   - –space (land use)
   - –arrangement of space to other programs
   - –acquisition of needed space
7. Equipment requirement
   - –hardware
   - –software

The developers of the IEG suggest that this plan will help facilitate evaluation by providing essential information for rational decision making in career education.

General Goals. Outcome approaches have been suggested (Baker, 1974; Clark, 1974; Miller, 1974; O'Neil, 1973; PRIDE, 1970). In the PRIDE program, local personnel plan and conduct a self-review of objectives. Miller (1974) lays out a checklist of objectives for the *elementary school* program as follows:

1. Knowledge of various jobs and why some people prefer some jobs over others.
2. Objectives designed to guide the learning activities for attaining knowledge, acquiring skills, and developing attitudes relative to careers.
3. Numerous occupations representing a broad range of skills.
4. Values of work illustrated within our complex technical society.
5. Career preparation materials available and used.
6. Good citizenship principles included in the activities.
7. Resource materials available and used by teachers and students.
8. Initial awareness developed in each occupational cluster.
9. Career decisions based on accessible occupations and a realistic assessment of personal abilities, interests, goals.
10. "Hands on" experiences in the various labs and classrooms.
11. Multi-sensory approaches employed regularly in instruction.

Baker (1974) suggests the following 10 objectives for a *junior high* check list:

1. Instruction
   a. Group processes for the core
   b. Individualized processes to compensate for individual interests and abilities.
2. Planned objectives designed to guide learning activities for attaining knowledge, acquiring skills, developing attitudes.
3. Sequential learning activities progressing from simple to complex.
4. Student-accomplishment-centered activities emphasizing personal success and meaning in career related activities.
5. Citizenship, including cooperation, responsibility, and other positive attitudes.
6. Broad range of occupations that require specialized skills.
7. Values of work, illustrated within a complex, technical society.
8. Career exploration activities.
9. Change in technology and its implications for career success.
10. Evaluation of the student based on a variety of measures relative to skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Clark (1974) adds eight *high school* goals to the checklist:

1. Relevance between what the student does in school and what the entry-level jobs of an occupational cluster require.
2. Open-ended industrial-arts courses leading directly to a higher level course and/or the entry level jobs of an occupational cluster.

3. Broader based knowledge, skills, and attitudes, providing a wide range of exit points to match student's needs and capabilities.
4. Integration between the knowing aspects and the "hands on" skills.
5. Performance based instruction, featuring specific occupational-like tasks reflecting knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
6. Individualized instruction, providing flexibility for any course to meet specific personal student needs.
7. Valid evaluation criterions and instruments so that the student can check his own progress, and demonstrate achievement of the objectives.
8. Goal-oriented guidance program, based on career development concepts to meet the educational, personal-social and vocational needs of all students.

Other goal-objective-outcome strategies have emerged from work with needs assessment, community labor market demands, surveys of pertinent student needs and student committee reports (Evaluation Service Center, 1972: McKinney and Mannebach, 1973; Webb and Herring, 1973).

Copa and Irvin (1973) report a local assessment technique of asking former high school students about their educational and employment activities. The former students replies are used to assess current student needs especially in terms of the deficiences that the former students report.

A regular program of strict experimental design in evaluation is supported by Schreiber and Black (1973) when they state that pre and post-tests should be used along with control groups for comparison. Because some changes cannot be measured by a test, a longitudinal evaluation (over a 10 year period) should be initiated. Evaluation must be made on the basis of behavioral objectives and must show how graduates will be different as a result of career education.

Shook and Morgan (1973) suggest some additional considerations when setting up a career education evaluation program:

1. A close working relationship between the evaluation team and the program's instructional staff
2. Instruments which have applicability to teachers and students, i.e., their usefulness is practical and results are immediately available to the instructional staff
3. A sensible use of student time for evaluation purposes. Do not let evaluation become an issue between the instructional staff and the evaluation team
4. A systematic compiling of base-line data from all students
5. A plan to provide research documentation
6. The need for programmatic data to determine whether or not career education really makes a difference
7. The use of the chosen external evaluation team in the design of the program
8. An effective means of dissemination of evaluation results

A National Cooperative. The Mesa Public Schools have proposed a cooperative in the areas of career guidance, counseling, placement, and follow-up. The evaluation alternatives in this forward looking proposal are as follows:

1. The cooperative will provide consultant aid to members in the design of strategies and instruments which will enable them to evaluate their programs in terms of expected outcomes and unanticipated side effects.
2. An instrument blank keyed to objectives will be set up and evaluation instruments and procedures will be made available to all members.
3. An evaluation training package will be available.
4. The cooperative will provide evaluation and staff accountability case studies using predetermined desired student outcomes. These will be available for members review and consultation.

Recommendations for Mississippi

The expanding economy of Mississippi will demand an increasingly sophisticated labor pool and a response to this demand by the educational system. The initial step should be commitment to the concept of career education and a commitment to restructure and support education in meaningful ways.

Passage of a career education bill by the state legislature alone will not effect this change unless provision is also made for the following:

a) Adequate funding of education. If career education is viewed as education for a career, the educational system must be effective *in toto.* The presence of career education specialists will not accomplish this end.

b) Provision for pre-service and in-service training of educators. Teachers, administrators, and counselors must be familiar with the concept of career education and their role in the process. The state department of education and the universities must be jointly involved in staff development.

c) Provisions for counselors in the minimum program. *All* career education concepts and programs call for a major counseling, guidance, and placement component. Counselors must be in place in adequate numbers and trained to carry out career guidance roles in order to implement

a state-wide career education program. This includes counselors in elementary schools, as well.

d) Continued expansion of comprehensive educational programs from elementary through university levels. Mississippi's efforts in vocational education have opened exciting avenues to students. The heart of career education is the availability of alternatives in education. The surface has just been touched when educators recognize that education is not confined to the traditional classroom.

e) Local system support in a state-wide commitment. Educators, legislators, and community must support career education efforts in local schools, so that programs bear their imprint. The intent is not to "rediscover the wheel." Career education is already a lively, developed process. The need instead is to adapt the program to local needs and to individual students.

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